

## Appendix F: Definitions

**Catsteps:** Bench-like features that are characteristic of the steep, loess slopes. They are the result of natural slippage of loess slopes.

**Comprehensive Planning:** The comprehensive planning process takes into account environmental problems such as population growth, erosion, resource depletion, urban sprawl, and landscape degradation. A Comprehensive Plan (CP) provides goals, policies, and guidance for future land use to direct the physical development of a site for long-term resource protection and sustainable growth. It is a written document that specifies the actions, controls, and strategies to maintain an area's important qualities.

**Cumulative Impacts:** The results of actions that, viewed with other actions, have an additive impact on the resource that is affected by those actions.

**Cultural Resources:** Aspects of a cultural system that are valued by or are significantly representative of a culture or that contain significant information about a culture. Cultural resources may be tangible entities (such as sites, buildings, and objects) or cultural practices.

**Environmental Assessment (EA):** A brief document prepared in response to requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EA helps determine whether a proposed action or alternative actions could have significant adverse impacts on the environment.

**Environmentally Preferred Alternative:** Of the action alternatives analyzed in either an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, it is the alternative that would best promote the policies as stated in NEPA section 101 (Congressional declaration of national environmental policy).

**Geographical Information System (GIS):** A GIS consists of computer hardware, software and georeferenced data. Georeferenced data corresponds to a place on the surface of the earth. A GIS is capable of storing, analyzing, and producing georeferenced data, such as maps.

**Issues:** For the purposes of National Environmental Policy Act documents, issues are environmental, social, and economic problems or effects that may occur if the proposed action or alternatives (including the no-action alternative) are implemented or continue to be implemented.

**Joint Powers Board:** An entity composed of state and/or local governments that makes efficient use of their powers by providing joint services and facilities with other agencies, and who cooperate in other ways to their mutual advantage. Any public agency may enter into an agreement with one or more public or private agencies for joint or cooperative action, including the creation of a separate entity to carry out the purpose of the agreement.

**Local Government Units (LGU):** As described in the Special Resource Study for the Loess Hills, LGUs are the first order of government that responds to local community needs, and makes policy decisions. Examples are town, city, and county governments.

**Loess:** A fine-grained silt composed dominantly of quartz and deposited by the wind during the Pleistocene Age. In Iowa, it originates primarily from glacial outwash. It is normally yellowish-brown and has a widely varied calcium-carbonate content.

**National Historic Landmark:** National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are designated by the Secretary of Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which authorizes the Secretary to identify historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and objects which "possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States." Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal agencies exercise a higher standard of care when considering activities that may directly and adversely affect NHLs.

**National Preserve:** Usually a large natural place similar to a national park, but where Congress has permitted one or more of the following activities: public hunting, grazing, mineral exploration, and extraction.

**National Reserve:** An area of nationally significant resources that are protected through a program of local land use management supported by federal financial and technical assistance.

**National Natural Landmark:** The National Natural Landmarks program was established by the Secretary of Interior in 1962, under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467), and administered by the National Park Service. A National Natural Landmark (NNL) is a nationally significant natural area that has been designated by the Secretary of Interior. To qualify as nationally significant, a site must be one of the best examples of a type of biotic community or geologic feature in its physiographic province. Landmarks are designated on both public and private land, with the program designed to have concurrence of the owner or administrator.

**National Register of Historic Places:** The Nation's official list of cultural resources that are deemed worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. These resources can be significant at the local, state, and/or national level.

**Natural Resource:** Any material that exists in nature independently of human industry and that is somehow utilized by humans, such as water, air, soils, forests, fish and wildlife. Scenic landscapes are included in this definition.

**National Scenic Byway:** The National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program was established to recognize certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration.

**Preferred Alternative:** The alternative that has been identified as preferred at the draft EA/EIS stage. It is identified to indicate which alternative is likely to be selected, thereby helping the public focus its comments.

**Resources:** In this document resources are regarded as either/or the natural (flora, fauna, soil, water, air, scenic views, etc.) and cultural (historic structures, archeological sites, historic landscapes, etc.) components of the landscape.

**Special Resource Study :** A study authorized by Congress to determine if an area/site meets established criteria for inclusion into the National Park System. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for carefully screening proposals for new park units to assure that only the most outstanding natural or cultural sites or resources are considered for addition to the System. To be eligible for favorable consideration as a unit of the National Park System, an area must possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, be a suitable and feasible addition to the system, and requires direct NPS involvement.

**Topography:** The physical relief features or surface configuration of the landscape.

**Viewshed:** A broad landscape or panorama that is within sight.